

The Vermont School Readiness Series

What Do We Know?

Are Our Children Ready for School?

Children who are “ready” for school

have the early nurturing and learning experiences that will help them make the most of school.

Schools that are “ready” for children help children and their families make that important transition to school a happy one. And, together with other community partners, “ready schools” engage parents and children in appropriate learning opportunities, inside and outside of school.

Success in school begins in kindergarten! School readiness makes a difference, because children who are ready are more likely to start school successful, and stay successful. By the same token, children who are less ready tend to fall further behind as they move along in school.

In Vermont, many children are well-prepared for school, but many are not. School readiness is made up of many dimensions—social and emotional development along with basic knowledge and understanding, for example, as well as good physical health. Language



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skills are important, and so are the “approaches to learning” that include following directions, paying attention, curiosity, and persistence.

Kindergarten teachers tell us that, statewide, more than half of Vermont kindergartners are ready in all five dimensions; about one-quarter are ready in three or four; and about another quarter are ready in only one or two areas, or not ready in any.

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Children's Readiness for Kindergarten • Vermont, 2004

52% of children were ready in **5** domains

23% of children were ready in **2 or fewer** domains

25% of children were ready in **4 or 3** domains

Readiness domains include:

- social-emotional development
- approaches to learning
- communication
- cognitive development & general knowledge
- health & physical well-being

Source: VT Agency of Human Services and VT Department of Education, School Readiness Assessment Initiative

Are the Schools Ready For Our Children?

What About Schools?

In general, Vermont's schools are doing well at helping smooth the transition into kindergarten for young children and their families. They also provide kindergarten teachers with many of the resources they need to meet the diverse needs of their students. Fewer schools, however, are providing appropriate instruction for young children, or acting as full partners with their communities.

What can you do?

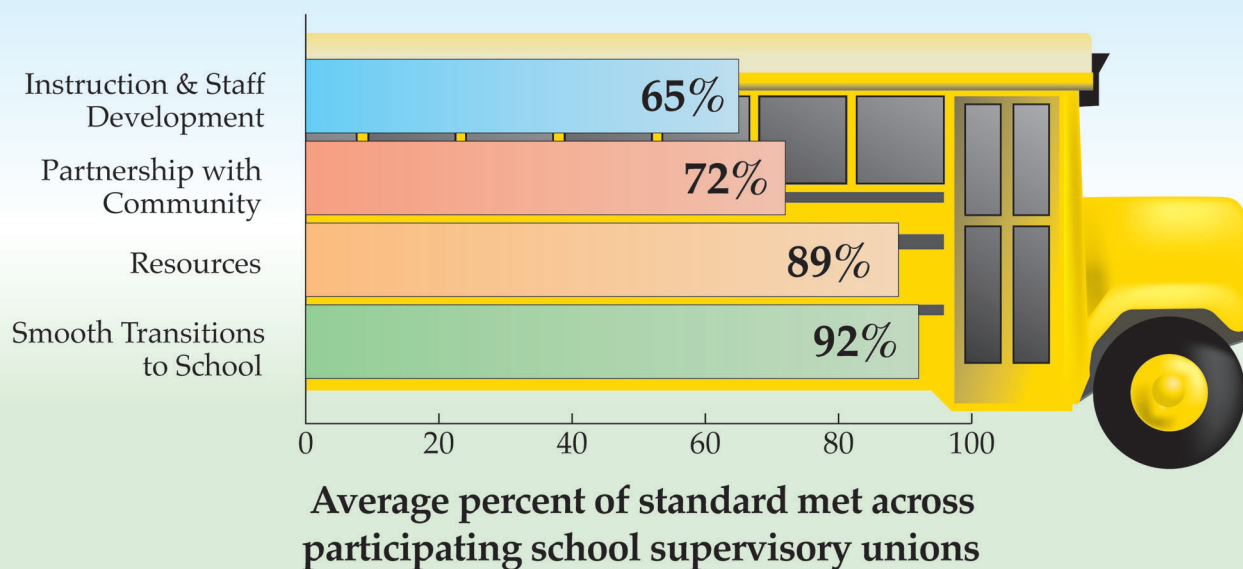
- Look up the performance of children and schools in your community. View your Community Profile at www.ahs.state.vt.us/03ComPro/03ComProExpl.cfm, which includes readiness indicators; or contact your school superintendent for the most recent school readiness report for your community.

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View your Community Profile:
ahs.state.vt.us/03ComPro/03ComProExpl.cfm

- Discuss the results with your neighbors, school personnel, and providers of early childhood care and education. What will it take in your community, to help more children get ready for school, and to improve the school's readiness for children?
- Not all responses have to involve spending more money. Consider what parents can do. Consider what schools can do. Consider what early care, education, and health providers can do. Consider what other community institutions can do.

Schools' Readiness for Young Children and Their Families Vermont, 2004



Source: VT Agency of Human Services and VT Department of Education, School Readiness Assessment. Data are based on responses from kindergarten teachers and principals who participated in the assessment. National comparison data are not available.

For more information:

The Vermont School Readiness Assessment Initiative

At the VT Agency of Human Services, contact David Murphey, 802-241-2238, or davidm@ahs.state.vt.us

Child Care Fund of Vermont

PO Box 64737
Burlington, VT 05401
www.storyofachild.org

Vermont Parent Child Center Network

Parent Child Centers around the state provide assistance and education to young families at low or no cost.
802-388-3171
www.vermontfamilyresource.org/PCCNetwork

Child Development Division, Department for Children and Families Agency of Human Services

103 South Main St.
Waterbury, VT 05671
802-241-2131
800-649-2642
www.state.vt.us/srs/childcare



What will it take in your community, to help more children get ready for school, and to improve the school's readiness for children?

- 1 Shore R. Ready schools: A report of the Goal 1 Ready Schools Resource Group. National Education Goals Panel. Washington, DC, 1998.
- 2 West J, Denton K, and Germino-Hausken E. America's kindergartners: Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, Fall 1998. NCES 2000-070. U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC, 2000.
Denton K, and West J. Children's reading and mathematics achievement in kindergarten and first grade. U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC, 2002.
- 3 Vermont Agency of Human Services, and Vermont Department of Education. Vermont School Readiness Assessment Initiative.
- 4 Ibid.



School Readiness Series:

What Do We Know?

Children's readiness for kindergarten
Schools' readiness for children

Are Our Young Children Healthy?

Children who are overweight or at risk
Health factors affecting learning

Families With Special Challenges

Children living in poverty
Domestic violence and substance abuse
Incarceration of parents
Refugees

Social-Emotional Development

Behavioral/emotional development
Interaction with other students
Challenges for teachers

Children With Special Needs

Who are children with special needs?
Support information

The Workforce in Early Care & Education

Caring for caregivers
Paid caregivers
Investing in quality childcare

The School Readiness Series is one of several research initiatives currently supported by the Vermont Research Partnership. Too many children enter kindergarten with physical, social, emotional and cognitive limitations that could have been minimized or eliminated through early attention to child and family needs. States are developing comprehensive school readiness indicator systems, a necessity to sustain current investments in the most effective programs for children and to make the case for increased investments to improve outcomes for young children and their families. Vermont's School Readiness Series strives to communicate that "readiness" is a shared responsibility of families, schools and communities. The Series provides fundamental school readiness indicators and resources for additional information about what can be done to help young Vermonters make the most of school.

The Vermont Research Partnership was established in 1998 as a collaborative between the Agency of Human Services, the Department of Education, and the University of Vermont. The Partnership's primary objective is to study and improve the effectiveness of community-based initiatives undertaken by these three parties. The Vermont Research Partnership develops shared research agendas on topics of particular importance for enhancing policies and practices that affect children, youth, and families. Projects engage the diverse perspectives of researchers, program directors, practitioners, and community members from across the state.



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